



# NEWS RELEASE

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Dee Butler 703-358-1884

## **1996 NORTH AMERICAN WATERFOWL MANAGEMENT PLAN** **AWARDS ANNOUNCED**

Celebrating a decade of successful cooperative migratory bird and wetland habitat conservation and management, the North American Waterfowl Management Plan today announced the recipients of its International Canvasback and National Great Blue Heron awards.

The International Canvasback Award, the plan's highest award, is given to individuals, corporations, or organizations making long-term contributions to the implementation of the plan throughout North America. The National Great Blue Heron Award is presented to plan participants whose long-term contributions result in benefits to waterfowl and other migratory bird populations.

"Those selected to receive the 1996 awards share the deep concern for the natural world that is the driving spirit behind the plan," said Robert Streeter, assistant director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, in announcing the awards.

The Inuvialuit Game Council, Canada, received the 1996 International Canvasback Award. Stewart Morrison, Canada; Mauricio Cervantes Abrego, Mexico; the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, United States; The David and Lucile Packard Foundation, United States; and Phillips Petroleum Company, United States all received the National Great Blue Heron Award.

"The Inuvialuit Game Council has committed its time and resources to benefit the international Arctic Goose Joint Venture and the overall goals of the plan," Streeter said. Since 1991, the council has contributed more than \$1.6 million to projects that advance data collection about Arctic-nesting geese. While funding has been dedicated to projects within their region, project results contribute to the better management of waterfowl throughout North America.

Stewart "Stew" Morrison was the chief executive officer of Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC), a position from which he retired in 1995 after 26 years of service. "Morrison was a mainstay in plan activities from the onset. During his tenure at DUC, he promoted the plan nationwide and provided the leadership that has made DUC pivotal in on-the-ground delivery of the plan. It was Morrison's vision and direction that took DUC from a project/individual landowner approach to wetlands conservation to the broader

Office of Public Affairs  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20240  
Room 3447

(202) 208-5634  
FAX (202) 219-2428

approach of landscape conservation through partnerships as espoused by the plan," Streeter said.

Mauricio Cervantes Abrego from Guaymas, Sonora, Mexico, is associated with Wetlands International, the World Wildlife Fund, and the Guaymas Campus of the Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey. According to Streeter, Cervantes Abrego helped pioneer the cause of wetlands conservation in his country. He has also helped forge international conservation partnerships for several of Mexico's priority wetlands, notably at Marismas Nacionales, a huge mangrove estuary in the State of Nayarit. In his academic role, Cervantes Abrego has organized symposia and training courses on wetlands, and has written numerous publications, including the Mexico Wetland Bulletin. His work with the RAMSAR Convention led Mexico to designate three new wetlands sites.

"Even before the inception of the plan, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources made significant long-term contributions to wetlands conservation," Streeter said. These contributions amount to more than \$10 million for conservation projects in Canada and the United States, resulting in hundreds of thousands of acres of wetland habitats protected, restored, or enhanced. Since 1990, pursuant to state statute, the department has been turning over 25 percent of the revenues received from the sale of state migratory waterfowl stamps to non-profit organizations for implementation of the plan.

During the past 6 years, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation has awarded 30 grants totaling more than \$1.48 million to partners in the California Central Valley Habitat Joint Venture. The foundation has funded such concerns as research, habitat acquisition, restoration, and enhancement. "The plan committee recognized this long-term and generous support in helping to achieve joint venture goals by presenting the foundation with its National Great Blue Heron Award," Streeter said.

"Phillips Petroleum Company has had a tradition of environmental protection and partnerships since the 1940s," according to Streeter. It has extended that tradition into the 1990s in support of wetlands and waterfowl through the plan's Playa Lakes and Gulf Coast joint ventures. Phillips has donated more than \$625,000 toward habitat projects and recently committed \$75,000 per year for habitat conservation in the joint venture. The company has also made contributions in outreach, funding the development and printing of a Playa Lakes brochure, book, video, and teaching materials.